(b) The reasons are as follows:

(i) Spare parts for repair of MARR are not available.

(ii) Erratic power supply in villages.

(iii) Battery being misused for other purposes by the VPT custodians.

(iv) Non-motorable roads leading to delay in restoration.

(v) Theft of wire on long physical lines

(c) All out efforts are made to make them functional at the earliest. To further improve the services there is a plan to replace existing MARR VPTs by WLL and laying of underground cable in villages and opening of new exchange in phased manner.

Review of Indian Telegraph Act

4546. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that certain sections of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 and 1898 adequate powers to Government to intercept messages and postal articles of any person;

(b) whether these provisions have invited lot of criticism as it impinge upon the rights of the citizens guaranteed under the constitution; and

(c) whether Government propose to review the Indian Telegraph Act so as to remove such provision which impinge upon the citizen rights?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, Indian Telegraph Act, *inter-alia*, provides that on the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety, the Central Government or a State Government or any officer specially authorized in this behalf by the Central Government or a State Government may, if satisfied that it

is necessary or expedient so to do in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of offence, etc. may direct interception of messages on Telecommunication Networks in the country. However, the provisons of Indian Telegraph Act are not applicable to interception of postal articles.

(b) In order to protect the rights of an individual, the above mentioned provision is being exercised as per the guidelines laid under Rule 419A, Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 which have been formulated according to the directions given by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in their judgement dated 18-12-1996 in a writ petition (C No. 256 of 1991).

(c) Indian Telegraph Act is being reviewed in the new Communication Convergence Bill which has already been introduced in Lok Sabha during August, 2001. It also contains similar provision.

Advertisement of Dispatch of Bills

4547. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the practice in Chennai Telephones of advertising in the Newspapers regarding the details of dispatch of bills has been found quite useful;

(b) whether there is any proposal to extend this practice to other cities; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Depending upon need-perception, the practice is already being followed in certain other cities as well; and is likely to be extended further to Akola, Amravati, Bangalore, Bongaigaon,